

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 30, 1973

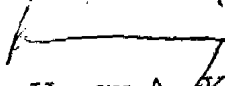
Dear Jim:

I appreciate your letter of May 30 concerning a possible pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons against cities. As you pointed out, such a pledge has considerably different implications than a no-first-use policy for all nuclear weapons and may offer some interesting political and psychological advantages.

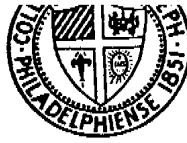
I agree with your thought that it has both promises and dangers, requiring considerable analysis and thought. We must assess the impact of such a pledge on strategic deterrence and arms control, as well as on our allies. In any event, it obviously is a concept which warrants exploration.

Thank you for your thought and interest.

Warm regards,


Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. James E. Dougherty
Executive Vice President
Saint Joseph's College
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131



SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19131

30 May 1973

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Dear Henry:

I wonder whether the time has come when the United States might give serious consideration to a proposal not for a general ban on first use of nuclear weapons -- to which I am opposed -- but for a pledge of no first use against cities, which may have much to commend it, if advanced by the United States.

Such a proposal corresponds to an essential impulse of Western civilization. The ancient Greeks agreed in the Delphic Amphictyony, as a matter of respect for civilization, not to destroy each other's cities in wartime. If we were now to float a similar idea in the context of the quest for European security, it could constitute a hopeful note which would strike a responsive chord in many places. I suggest it as good politics, good psychological strategy and not bad military security.

I will admit that the concept is not entirely consonant with some of the underlying assumptions of SALT I, including the MAD posture which Don Brennan so roundly scores. But I doubt that we really would ever want to strike first against cities as such, yet we are curiously reluctant to express our convictions in the matter, even though there may be political advantages in doing so, and in being the first to do so. The proposal should be carefully studied, to make certain that if made it would not degrade the deterrent.

With the restructuring of NATO in the offing, the proposal could have a salutary effect upon the mood of the Europeans. The technology to underpin a much more discriminating defense capability is emerging, such that the strengthening of defense can enhance the credibility of the deterrent instead of diluting it. A "no-first-use-against-cities" proposal could give NATO a psychopolitical advantage over the Warsaw Pact, and reduce apprehensiveness somewhat both in West and East Europe. Briefly, the proposal might run as follows:

"Each member state of the two treaty systems -- NATO and the Warsaw Pact -- solemnly pledges to refrain from the first use of weapons of mass destruction against the urban population centers of any state party to this agreement unless those centers house within a radius of (75) kilometers weapons of mass destruction in delivery vehicles capable of reaching the urban population centers of the targeting state. This prohibition shall cease to be legally binding in respect to actions against a signatory state which violates the provisions of the agreement as against another signatory state or

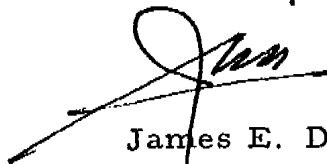
its treaty allies. All states of the world are invited to undertake on a reciprocal basis with member states of the two treaty systems the same obligations vis-a-vis the members of those treaty systems which the latter undertake toward each other."

Naturally, this would be a purely declaratory pledge. "No first use" is always a non-inspectable proposition, whether general or specific. This proposal enables the West to get some mileage out of the "no first use" idea, in keeping with its own civilizational tradition, without renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances -- which we cannot do. "Urban population centers" could be arbitrarily defined as those with populations in excess of one million, or a half million, or a quarter million, or a hundred thousand -- or the concept might be left undefined. (The Greeks did not bother to define "Greek cities.") Given the assumption that many of the Soviet IRBMs and MRBMs in western Russia are targeted on West European cities, this proposal might evoke a soft-spoken "touché" from Moscow (if Brezhnev is capable of that sort of thing!) We could even argue that this type of self-restraint is so in keeping with the basic instincts of all civilized peoples that here we can safely depart from our usual insistence upon effective verification (either international or national) to ensure compliance of other parties with arms control agreements.

This is still merely an idea -- full of danger, full of promise. Obviously it requires a great deal of analysis before it could be floated even within NATO, much less in Vienna, Helsinki, Geneva or wherever. But it could create an interesting new climate in the international arms control and strategic planning environment. I suspect that many European analysts would find it worth pursuing. It could also help us in our ongoing efforts to psychoanalyze the people in the Kremlin. In the end, they themselves might feel compelled to kill it -- at a political cost to themselves. We don't know. I would hope that we would not allow it to be asphyxiated prematurely within our own bureaucracy. This is why I have sought to plant the fertile seed in your mind. I am also writing identical letters to Jim Schlesinger and Fred Iklé.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,



James E. Dougherty
Executive Vice President

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Special Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D. C.

MEMORANDUM

3139

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

June 9, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Phil Odeen *PO*
SUBJECT: Letter from James E. Dougherty

James E. Dougherty, Executive Vice President of Saint Joseph's College, has written you a letter suggesting that the U.S. consider advancing a pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons against cities. This approach keeps open the possible first use of such weapons if needed in any military role, but puts the U.S. in a position of moral and psychological leadership in trying to avoid destruction of cities.

At Tab A is a proposed reply to Mr. Dougherty, thanking him for his interest. Mr. Dougherty, by the way, has written similar letters to Jim Schlesinger and Fred Ikle.